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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [KTIA](#) [HR](#) [SI](#) [AL](#)
SUBJECT: NATO SECRETARIAT AGREES WITH U.S. POSITION ON
SLOVENIAN TIMELINE FOR RATIFICATION OF CROATIA INTO NATO

REF: STATE 20395

Classified By: DCM Walter Andrusyszyn
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) The NATO Secretariat agrees with the United States that Slovenia must continue to do everything in its power to complete its ratification process in order to allow Croatia to join NATO in advance of the April 2-4 NATO Summit. NATO will continue to encourage Slovenia to find ways to complete its ratification as soon as possible. As requested, the NATO International Staff will try to convince Ljubljana that this should be done by April 2 rather than April 3. The Secretary General's Private Office is committed to working closely with the United States on the mechanics of any last minute action necessary to bring the two candidates into the Alliance on time. End Summary.

¶2. (C) PolOff delivered reftel demarche March 5 to Private Office Deputy Director Signe Brudeset, and Head of Country Relations and Political Affairs Robert Weaver. They firmly agreed that it is in the interests of the Alliance to have both Croatia and Albania successfully join NATO in advance of the April 3-4 Strasbourg-Kehl Summit. They committed to continue the NATO Secretariat's encouragement of Slovenia to find ways to deposit their ratification documents as soon as possible. Weaver said that NATO, as requested, would make the specific point to Slovenia that it should do everything in its power to make April 2 the worst-case deadline, rather than April 3.

¶3. (C) Brudeset and Weaver indicated that the SYG is committed to doing everything he can to ensure the successful accession of both candidate states in time. However, Brudeset shared the Private Office has been doing some preliminary thinking on what it would do if Slovenia were to fail to ratify Croatian accession in time. She was clear that the SYG would not be averse to the accession of the parties during the Summit itself, if it could not be achieved beforehand. Brudeset thought that the April 4 NAC meeting could be considered an appropriate moment by which accession could be achieved, because the April 3 working meetings would take place over dinner, and would be perceived as informal. Both Brudeset and Weaver indicated their willingness to work to give Croatia the best chance possible, even if that meant quick action in the days and hours leading up to the Summit. Brudeset also volunteered that even if either candidate were to fail to join NATO in time, it would be treated with almost the same status as a full Ally. The only distinction would be for any formal decisions of the NAC. The SYG would not

highlight anyone's inability to break silence. He would merely mask the presence of non-Allies by asking "Is there any member of the NAC that cannot agree with this decision?"

¶4. (C) In a separate conversation Weaver outlined steps taken by NATO so far: The Secretary General has been making telephone calls to President Mesic to coordinate and encourage him to do everything in his power to accelerate the end of the referendum petition process. The SYG also planned to meet with Foreign Minister Jandrokovic on the margins of the ongoing March 5 ministerial to discuss the issue. Additionally Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy Martin Erdmann has been conducting ongoing discussions with Slovenia about what NATO might be able to do to assist.

¶5. (C) Weaver also outlined two NATO International Staff concerns. He feared any completion of Croatian domestic procedures in advance of March 27 could spur more Slovenians to sign the petition requesting a referendum on Croatia's accession to NATO. Weaver also shared a concern of one of the NATO Legal Advisors that, if Albania and Croatia were to complete their domestic ratification procedures before Slovenia, they would have to leave the date on their deposit documents blank and insert it after the Slovenian documents were deposited in Washington. Weaver said he did not know if this position was legally correct.

¶6. (C) USNATO will continue to engage with NATO International Staff, Allies, and the candidates' delegations to encourage the achievement of membership for both candidates at the same time and in advance of the Summit. We will continue to work

with Washington and the Embassies in planning how USNATO and NATO itself can assist in quickly implementing the mechanics of the accession process when the time comes.

VOLKER